

Athens vs. Sparta



Population

Athens

- Approximately 285,000
- By 432 B.C. largest city-state
 - 150,000 Athenians
 - 40,000 aliens and 95,000 slaves

Sparta

- 8,000 adult males
- Over 100,000 slaves and semi-enslaved people

Government

Athens

- Direct democracy
- Elected officials including 10 generals, magistrates
- Council of 500: administer decision made by Assembly
- Assembly: all male citizens; passed laws
- Trial by jury

Sparta

- Oligarchy: rule by few
- Combination of different forms of government.
- Two kings: led army
- 5 Overseers: ran day-to-day operations of Sparta; had veto power
- Senate: 28 men over 60; elected for life; acted as judges; proposed legislation
- Assembly: all Spartan males

Social Structure

Athens

- Freeman: all male citizens
- Upper: Aristocrats
 - Land owners
 - Naval captains and military leaders
- Middle: small farmers
- Lower: craftsman
- Metics: foreigners
- Slaves: treated less harshly

Sparta

- Spartiates: Land owning military professionals
- Perioeci: foreigners who were craftsman, artisans
- Helots: serfs (farmers) who worked on the Spartiates' land
 - Gave 1/2 of all their produce to Spartiates / military

than other Greek city-states

Lifestyle / Values

Athens

- Democratic values
- Participation in government a civic responsibility
- Philosophy
- Theatre / sporting events
- Trading empire brought contact with many other cultures

Sparta

- Militaristic values
- Citizens were not permitted to own luxuries
- Children were taught to respect elderly, women, and warriors

Cultural Achievement

Athens

- Art
 - Sculptures
 - Pottery
- Architecture
- Drama
- Literature
- Philosophy
- Science
- Medicine
- Mathematics
- Democracy

Sparta

- Military supremacy
- Simple lifestyle
- “ideal” community

Education

Athens

- Schools taught reading, writing and mathematics, music, poetry, sport and gymnastics
- Ages 5-14 (wealthy went until 18)
- Academies were set up to study philosophy, rhetoric, and ethics
- Girls were taught homemaking skills

Sparta

- Boys: at age 7 they were taken from their parents and taught the art of war
 - Had to steal to survive
 - At age 20 they entered the military
 - At age 30 they were able to marry
- Girls: at age 7 they were taught reading and writing, gymnastics, athletics and survival skills

Role of Women

Athens

- Women were kept at home
- Could not participate in athletics
- Some women held high posts at religious ceremonies

Sparta

- Girls were educated
- Could participate in sports
- Goal was to produce healthy babies
- Married at 18
- Enjoyed a great deal of freedom
- Could own and control their property
- Expected to protect land while husband was at war

Food

Athens

- Enjoyed food from all over the empire
- Trade brought goods from all over the Mediterranean region

Sparta

- Spartan Broth: pork, blood, salt, vinegar
- Trained to dislike luxuries and fancy food
- Men lived separate from wives for much of the time

Sparta's Military Society

- Goal - make every male citizen a part of the military
- Military worked to expand Sparta and control the helots
- A group of officials examined new born babies and those deemed unhealthy were left to die
- At 7 boys left home to join the barracks
 - Mainly military training but they also learned how to read and write
 - From age 18-20 they learned specifically about warfare
 - At 20 they could marry but could not live at home until age 30
 - Available for military service until the age of 60

Sparta's Military Society

- Spartan women
 - Received strict physical training
 - Were taught to be devoted to the city-state
 - Best value was seen as producing Spartan soldiers
- Results of military society:
 - Strong government
 - Almost unbeatable army
 - No individual freedom
 - Created almost no art or literature and made almost no advances in science